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FAREWELL ADDRESS

ON OCCASION OF

TAKING TEMPORARY LEAVE OF HIS CONGREGATION

TO GO TO EUROPE,

AS AGENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY

FOR

MELIORATING THE CONDITION OF THE JEWS.

BY STEPHEN N. ROWAN, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE EIGHTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXXVIII.

FAREWELL ADDRESS

AT THE
FAREWELL MEETING

TAKING FAREWELL LEAVE OF HIS COUNTRY

TO GO TO EUROPE

ASSISTANT TO THE AMERICAN CONSUL

REGARDING THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

BY STEPHEN W. HOWARD, D.D.

LONDON:

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BY A. MACINTOSH, 25, GREAT NEW STREET

MDCCLXXXV

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THE following Discourse was delivered on the Evening of Sabbath, September 7th, 1828, from very short Notes, drawn up at intervals of the day, between the discharge of other ministerial duties. That part of it which came under the item of "Bible Societies," I was informed the morning of my embarkation, had given great umbrage to some strangers; simply, because it was misunderstood and misrepresented. The error on the part of the hearer, arose from looking rather too *far* back for a *nominative* case. Correct hearing, and correct taste, would have placed the different parts of *speech* in their existing order; and then it would have been found, that the offensive clauses applied to an entirely different subject. But there is a class of men, who by their remarks upon others, wish to place in a comparative and bold relief, their own *zeal*, which too often is in an inverse ratio to their *ignorance*. No sentiment concerning Bible

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Societies, was ever cherished or expressed by me, different from what is contained in the following pages. And it is to place my views in a proper light, as well as to give my Congregation a more tangible memorial of my regard for them, that I have here enlarged upon the brief hints from which I addressed them at parting: as such, they will please to accept this discourse. No motive arising from an opinion of its merit, could ever have induced the publication of such a Discourse by their Friend and Servant,

STEPHEN N. ROWAN.

London, October, 1828.

ADDRESS.

ACTS XX. 17—38.

And from Miletas he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also

of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him; Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

I ADDRESS you to-night under circumstances full of embarrassment. Hitherto, I have usually appeared before you with some previous preparation; but on this occasion, bodily debility, the result of severe illness, and mental excitement, growing out of the arrangement of the concerns of a large and dear family, and parting with long-tried and highly-valued friends, have prevented that preparation for a parting discourse which was due to myself and to you.

You are all familiar with the fact of my approaching departure for Europe. The American Society

for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, after deliberating long, on the best measures to be adopted, for the accomplishment of their benevolent object, have appointed me their Agent, with a view to obtain correct information as to the state of that scattered people in Germany and Poland, and to endeavour to secure the co-operation of Christians in Britain. I submitted my appointment to a Meeting of the Congregation, regularly called for the purpose; and on my expression of a willingness to accept it, with your consent, you sent me the result of your deliberations in the following words:—"Resolved that, while we shall regret the contemplated absence of our beloved Pastor, yet considering the importance of the object to the Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, and to the Christian Church at large, Dr. Rowan have leave of absence from his charge for twelve months."

On the eve of my contemplated temporary separation from you, I thought the parting words of Paul to the Church of Ephesus might be appropriate. From him, indeed, I am removed to an immense distance, in respect to personal worth, and ecclesiastical importance; yet in this we assimilate—leaving people dear to us. His parting words open a wide and richly-cultivated field of instruction and consolation; but I have only time and ability to gather the gleanings of his vintage.

The points of his address to which I shall refer you, are, the justification of his ministerial conduct while at Ephesus; his annunciation of a new field of labour; his charge to the Elders; and his com-

mendation of the church and people to God and the word of his grace.

I. The Vindication of his Ministerial conduct while at Ephesus:—"And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there."*

From these verses it appears, that an *Apostle*, in a farewell address, condescended to say something in vindication of himself. And it may not be improper in a minister of much lower standing, in this respect to imitate his example; inasmuch as there may be those, who *after his departure* might lay scandals and falsehoods to his charge, which they dared not do to his face.

The prophet Samuel thus made provision for such ungracious anticipations:—"And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a

* Verses 17—22.

king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you : and I am old and gray-headed ; and, behold, my sons are with you ; and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am : witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed ; whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it you.”*

And thus Paul, in his forebodings of the development of the corrupt propensities of human nature to transgress the ninth commandment, made a solemn appeal while present, to those who were familiar with the facts to which he referred ; and who could easily have confronted him if they were untrue. These facts were—

1st. That his general conduct had been that of a humble and persevering minister of Christ, notwithstanding the trials to which he was thereby necessarily exposed. “ And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews.”†

From the time of his miraculous conversion, Paul had become the object of special hatred to the Jews. By one of those singular anomalies in the history of

* 1 Sam. xii. 1- 3.

† Verses 18, 19.

man—one of those horrible inconsistencies of human nature, which has *since* characterised their race,—that while they plead and contend for toleration for themselves, they are most intolerant towards any who abandon their delusions in respect to Messiah, they *then* persecuted Paul for deserting their standard for that of Christ. And the hungerings, and stripes, and imprisonments, he records, witness the extent and virulence of their malice. Their persecutions followed him to Ephesus, in the dangerous form of “lying in wait,” most probably for his life. In addition to these trials, the *Gentiles* at Ephesus had grieved his spirit, by their stupid, perverse, and iniquitous worship of idols; by the selfishness of craftsmen, who looked more to their gains than their consciences in the construction of images; and by the tumultuous cry, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” Yet he here appeals to the eye and ear witnesses of his conversation and conduct, that in labouring to promote the interest and glory of Christ, he had not manifested haughtiness, or ostentation, arising from any conscious importance of his apostolic office; but that he had cherished humble thoughts of himself, under a sense of his own personal insufficiency and unworthiness, which had often, both in his prayers and his preaching, excited a flow of “many tears.”

2d. Another fact to which he called their attention was, that the *matter* of his preaching was the doctrine of the cross; and that the *manner* of it was impartial, and social, and disinterested. “And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to

house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."*

In the twenty-first verse he testifies, that in all his ministrations he had insisted on two of the vital articles of the Christian creed—*repentance* towards God, and *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ. He shewed that Christ is exalted as a Prince to *give* repentance; and that this gracious gift consists in a heartfelt sense of the evil nature, and dangerous consequences of sin; in honest contrition for it, and hatred of it; and in turning away from the love and practice of it unto God, as the result of the encouragement held out to the poor sinner in the Gospel, and the aids of His free mercy through Jesus Christ.

In the discussion of the other grand subject of his ministry he shewed, that *faith* is the gift of God; that its *object* is the person and mediation of Jesus Christ; and that in its *nature*, it is the cordial assent of the convinced sinner to the Gospel declarations, that Christ is the divine, and only suitable and all-sufficient Prophet, Priest, and King, of the Church; and the reception of, and reliance on, Him alone, for the pardon of sin, justification, and eternal life.

The *manner* in which he discussed these doctrines, corresponded with his sense of their importance, and of their inseparable connexion with other truths of

* Ver. 20, 21, 27, 33.

the Gospel. It was *impartial*;—He did not tell one of his hearers what he withheld from another. Neither the fear of frowns from one, or the hope of favour from another, induced him to “hold back anything that was profitable.” He “shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.”* He proclaimed all that God had been pleased to reveal, of his eternal counsel for the salvation of lost sinners, without any mixture of ancient Judaizing traditions, or modern human inventions. And this he did, not only publicly, and in a more formal manner in all religious assemblies, but in a more private and social manner, from house to house, in those families where he had an opportunity of meeting and mingling at the domestic altar. This course of public and private instruction he had been enabled to pursue in such a manner, as to free himself from the charge of interested or secular views. So far from labouring among the Ephesians with a view to their “silver, or gold, or apparel,” he had, with his “own hands,” worked at his trade of tent-making,† to earn his bread, and provide necessary supplies for those of his friends and brethren who accompanied him, or might pay him a visit. In this respect he says, he furnished them an example of practical industry and hospitality, as the surest road to the luxury of an approving conscience, and the happiness derived from the words of the Lord Jesus, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”‡

In these particulars, Brethren, I would, if need

* Verse 27.

† Acts xviii. 3.

‡ Verse 35.

be, vindicate myself, after the example of Paul, before my departure.

I think I may safely say, that the doctrines I have preached to you, are those of the Old and New Testament, as developed in the standards of the Reformation. Those venerable fathers who composed the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Confession and Catechisms of our own Church, had, it appears to me, correct, comprehensive, and enlarged views of Scriptural truth. The *new light*, which some modern divines have shed upon those views, is a *new* edition of the *old darkness*, with which Socinus and Arminius obscured Divine revelation. From this twilight, I have endeavoured to lead you, to that full light of day, created by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, that in his light, you might see light.

And in respect to the two important doctrines to which Paul refers, I humbly hope I have given Paul's views. I have not perplexed you with the casuistry of the question, whether in the nature of things and in the order of time, repentance precedes faith, in the experience of the Christian. I have not endeavoured to confound you, with the metaphysical jargon of your natural or moral ability or inability to repent and believe, but have told you, that both these graces are the gift of God; that in their exercise you can do nothing without the grace and Spirit of Christ; and that while the one will lead you to lothe yourselves for all your iniquities and abominations before God, the other will lead you to the Saviour, and induce you to trust to his merit and righteousness alone for the favour of God, and admission to the heavenly kingdom.

These doctrines I would at parting, again preach in your hearing: "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "But he that believeth not, shall be damned."

As to the *manner* of my ministrations, it does not become me to speak with the confidence of Paul. I have been with you in much weakness, in the midst of personal, and domestic, and social trials; yet have I endeavoured to persevere in going in and out before you without the distractions to which such trials expose the human mind. I have impartially, without any wish to please one, or offend another, and without the hope of favour from one, or the fear of frowns from another, declared what I honestly believe is the truth as it is in Jesus. This truth I have taught you not only publicly, but in many of your families. My family visits, have not been so general, nor so frequent, as I could have wished, and as my own blessed experience of their advantages, have led me to desire. This has been owing to no want of conviction of their importance and ministerial obligation, but to the necessity of resorting to collateral ecclesiastical avocations, in order to support my family, and enable me, so far as my influence extended, to sustain this Institution. "For yourselves know, that (if not in tent, at least in book-making) these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." "I have *coveted* no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." I have not gone after the error of Balaam *for reward*. I have ever considered a craving, eager desire for money in a

minister of Christ, as a disgusting fact, and as a proof of the awful state of his soul in the sight of God. There have been teachers in former times, who took the fleeces, while they starved the souls of the flock. And they are *not all dead* in the present day. I think I may appeal to your knowledge of the amount I have received from you, that I am not one of *the living*.

2. It is important before leaving you, that I place in a proper light my conduct in accepting the agency to Europe of the American Society for meliorating the condition of the Jews.

This agency, many of you know, is very unpopular with a number of persons in this city, as having an object, which, to use their own language, "ought not to be imposed on the charities of the Christian public;" viz. the temporal relief, in connection with the religious instruction of the Jews. Yet have I deemed the matter of sufficient importance to induce me to take it into solemn consideration; and in its furtherance to leave for a season, my native land. And the facts I will now lay before you, will shew, that however some may attempt to ridicule the subject, it has occupied the serious attention of the wise and the good, who have been long conversant with all the difficulties that follow in its train.

One fact, to which I shall call your attention, is that a number of the members of the Established Church of England, and of the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, whose constitution forbids them to extend temporal relief, have declared themselves a Provisional Committee,

to receive and disburse monies for this very object ; and let them speak for themselves in justification of their conduct. I quote from the Jewish Expositor as follows, viz.—

In the process of promoting Christianity amongst the Jews on the Continent of Europe, one difficulty invariably presents itself: the proselyte is immediately deprived of the means of gaining a livelihood, and is exposed to privation and want. This unquestionable fact has suggested the inquiry—whether any, and what methods can be adopted to meet this serious evil, without affording inducements to hypocrites to make an insincere profession of Christianity for the sake of gain ?

The practical difficulty of this subject became evident in the early operations of the London Society, and before it had extended its labours abroad; and after long experience and much consideration, the Society came to the resolution, not to afford temporal relief to adult Jewish Converts, on any ground whatever. This resolution was adopted only in reference to the London Society, whose sole and professed object was, to promote Christianity amongst that people.

This rule, though just and judicious on the part of the Society, has occasioned, nevertheless, many difficulties, and those frequently of a painful nature, and caused much serious inconvenience to the Missionaries in their intercourse with Jewish converts. Truly converted Jews have often been plunged into deep distress; inquiring Jews have been withheld from the means of grace, and others have been forced to join themselves to superstitious and corrupt Churches, because they there found that support, which was denied by those whose creed was more agreeable to the word of God.

The Jew who evinces any disposition even to inquire into the truths of Christianity, is at once cast off by his family and nation. In general, he has no trade, by which he can earn an honest livelihood; and if he has been, as is often the case, a teacher amongst his own people, all his learning, which is entirely rabbinical, is utterly useless amongst Christians; and whatever may have been his station aforetime, he sees himself a wretched out-

cast, without means of subsistence; and thus, in the very commencement, he is tempted to stifle his convictions, to do violence to his conscience, and to remain in all the darkness of Judaism, because his faith as yet is not strong enough to encounter privation and want for the truth's sake.

Christian charity would say, "Give ye them to eat. He who gave to their progenitors the bread from heaven, did not withhold the bread which perisheth—he wrought a miracle to feed them." But then, needy hypocrites would avail themselves of the offer, and come and profess a desire of Christian teaching, in order to gain temporal relief; and at length, either by unmasking themselves, or being detected by others, bring disgrace on the profession of Christianity, and hold up the efforts of the agents of the Society to the sneers and contempt of an unbelieving and ungodly world.

There is a way, however, in which the difficulty may be obviated; that is, by providing them with employment at some handicraft trade, and paying them only for the work done. As the Jews have a great objection to manual labour, and as the learned amongst them consider it a degradation, much work, with moderate pay, will effectually deter the hypocrite, while at the same time, it will be cheerfully undertaken by those who are sincere.

Something of this sort was proposed long since by the learned and pious Bishop Kidder, in whose affections the Jews held a distinguished place. He says, in reference to efforts for their conversion:—"Supposing we should gain none but some of the poorest, yet if they come in upon conviction, there will not be wanting charity enough among Christians to maintain them. I doubt not but there would be some house erected (by voluntary contributions) to receive them. Such provision hath been formerly made for them in the city of London. Here they might live under strict discipline, and one might be appointed to instruct them more perfectly in the Christian Religion, &c. &c. &c. Besides, if they be poor, they must be provided with means of comfortable subsistence. It is a shame that they should run about begging, and be exposed to hardships to get bread. Our great care must be to bring them over upon a clear conviction,

and to take care of them after that, that they want neither law nor meal, (as the Jews phrase it,) i. e. instruction or bread." Such was the opinion of the pious Bishop ; and that the plan is not to be considered impracticable, will appear from the fact, that the Count von der Recke has an Institution in Germany, for proselyte or converted Jews. Thirty persons of this description are at the present time there employed, and are also instructed in the truths of Christianity by a pious minister.*

Feeling the importance of the subject, and desirous that the experiment should be fully tried, the Gentlemen whose names are subjoined, have undertaken, as a PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE, to receive the contributions of the public, and to superintend the proper distribution of them.

Signed by—Rev. C. S. Hawtrey ; Rev. J. B. Cartwright ; Rev. I. Saunders ; Mr. J. G. Barker ; Mr. John Bayford ; Mr. H. C. Christian ; and Mr. James Taylor.

10, *Wardrobe-Place, Doctors-Commons*, Sept. 26, 1827.

The other fact is, that a letter written from Germany, by Professor Robinson of Andover, to an opponent of the plans of the American Institution, avows that the Christians of Berlin deem such an Institution indispensable for the relief of enquiring Jews, and proposes the transfer of our funds to that city, for this object. Thus, from two very remote and entirely different sources, we have information upon which reliance may be placed, that such are the peculiar circumstances of poor Jews on their profession of Christianity, that the melioration of their temporal condition is as much a matter of necessity, and of moral Christian obligation, as their spiritual instruction. The first witnesses have long

* I regret to learn, since my arrival in England, that the Count's institution is broken up ; but its dissolution is owing to causes, which render the establishment of similar institutions elsewhere *indispensible*.

acted, and still act, with a Society which pertinaciously refuses temporal aid; yet their actual experience of the necessity of the case, induces them to associate together, to provide the remedy. And the other is an American, who though locally and ecclesiastically allied to those who have endeavoured to destroy our Institution, expresses his conviction of the necessity of one exactly similar.* And yet the object of the American Society has been pronounced *visionary*, and I, in accepting an agency which proposes to further it, have been pronounced even "*mad!*" "I am not mad, *most* noble Festus." I am not mad, thou *less* noble slanderer. The Sacred Volume has predicted, that the Jews shall come into the fold of Christ, with the fulness of the Gentile nations; and that the gold and the silver, which are the Lord's, shall be applied for the accomplishment of the glorious object. And have not the Jews bodies, as well as souls? Are not the necessities of the one, in their kind, as great as those of the other? Did our Lord, in supplying the wants of thousands by miracle, intimate, that in refreshing their *bodies*, their souls would be the sufferers? that they would listen with greater indifference to his doctrines? or imbibe more disgusting ideas of the benevolence of Christianity? Do we not in all our operations for the conversion of poor Gentiles, act on the principle of affording them temporal relief?

* A letter has just been published from the Rev. S. R. Maitland, who was deputed to visit the missionary stations of the London Society, which on the basis of facts *coming under his own observation*, avows the same sentiment.

Do we not raise money to build churches for them; and to support missionaries to preach to them? And if they have not the means of subsistence, do we not make collections for their relief? Is not the principle in both cases the same? And must there not be some perversity of intellect in the application of Christian charities to the believing Gentile alone, to the utter exclusion of the believing outcast Jew? Yet am I pronounced visionary and mad! But it *may be providential*, that the man selected for the agency in such a scheme of benevolence can say, "None of these things move me;" and that all the conversation of disappointed meddlers, and all the newspaper attacks made upon him and his object, pass like vapours round *the foot* of that mountain, on the summit of which, his moral firmness and integrity are placed.

3. I deem it expedient, under circumstances in which my departure may place me, to vindicate my ecclesiastical policy.

I have not *recently*, and probably never shall, act with some of my brethren in what they call the great and glorious plans of the day; and this withdrawal has subjected me to much unmerited censure, because my motives have been misunderstood, or if understood, have not been appreciated. The primary reason might easily be found in the fact, that for five years, all the time I could spare, and more than I ought to have spared from my congregation, has been devoted to the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews. It was, therefore, impossible to give much attention to other

Societies in a city, where pastors, to do justice to their people, and at the same time aid in conducting benevolent institutions, must and ought to class themselves in their operations. Previously I aided in the formation and management of the American Bible, and the United Foreign Missionary Societies; and my brethren who are *now* conducting Bible and Missionary efforts, when they shall have selected one Society as the field of their labours, or when by domestic or ministerial cares they shall be unable to attend any, may possibly experience the painfulness of my feelings, when, as in my case, some ecclesiastical tyros, who were drawing angles on mathematical black boards, or teaching country schools, while I was marching with the foremost in the ranks of benevolent effort, shall enter into their labours, and charge them with want of zeal in their Master's cause!

But it would be the grossest affectation in me, to pretend to disguise that I have other reasons.* When men manifest injudicious zeal in the support of those noble institutions, which at once honour and bless our country—when men abandon their own proper sphere, for the management of concerns for which they are qualified neither by talents nor by influence—men who have no ecclesiastical responsibilities, whose measures are rash and ill-judged, and consequently excite and increase the prejudices of intelligent and worldly-minded men against Christianity—surely I may be at liberty to judge whether

* It is not pretended that in my extempore discourse, I said all that is here; but I do affirm, *that all I said* is here.

I will act with them, without being considered as impugning either their object or their motives. Still more,—when benevolent institutions become anomalous, wild, irregular, and impetuous in their movements, and thus subversive of all my views of good ecclesiastical order; when they are vehicles through which worldly-minded men display their vanity in trumpeted munificent donations, contrary to the precept, “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;” when they become splendid pageants, having more glare than solidity; when they become the engines of *a party*, and especially when they diffuse doctrines which I believe to be unscriptural, I may be at liberty to leave their management to others. I do not pretend to apply these remarks to any American institution; but must of course assume the responsibility of their application where it is just.

With these preliminaries you are entitled to my view of Bible and Missionary Societies, and plans for the revival of religion.

1. Wealth, and talent, and piety, have come forward in the cause of the *Bible*, and have raised the reputation of the *American Bible Society* to an elevation, which honours and immortalizes their patronage. And from my soul do I pray, that their success may be such, that the precious Book may soon be distributed among all the families of the earth. But may not too much importance be attached to the *mere distribution* of the Bible? Is there any charm in leaves contained between two leather covers to convert the soul, unless the means

of God's appointment are applied to them, their *reading*, and their *explanation*, and unless these means are accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit? The managers of Bible Societies should never forget, that the Bible and the living preacher, as inseparable companions, are essential to the progress of Christianity. What can even Bibles do, unless Missionaries carry them forth, and explain and inculcate their sacred contents? I need not be suspected of a design to disparage Divine Revelation by a question of this sort, since God himself, in his wisdom and sovereignty, has deemed it necessary to appoint an order of men to preach his word.

Nor is there mere *sovereignty* in this Institution. There is something to justify it in the very constitution of our natures. There is something in eye meeting eye, in the expression of an impassioned countenance, and in the sound of words from a human voice, which makes an appeal to the human heart. An address, however warm it may be, when coming from the lips of him who utters it, chills during the progress of printing, and comes to the heart of the reader, comparatively cold and repulsive, as the wind which passes over the northern snows. What God has joined together then, let no man put asunder; and while I entreat you with zeal and liberality to contribute to the support of Bible Societies, give efficiency to your benevolent exertions, by aiding in sending with the Bible, the living preacher; and especially by invoking the influences of the Spirit on those ordinances of his own appointment.

2. I am then, you perceive, a friend to missionary operations, under proper regulations. By these means, those who were long aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, have begun to flock to the standard of King Jesus; to cast their idols to the moles and to the bats; to embrace the Christian religion; and to worship the Christian's God. The *Sun of Righteousness* has risen upon the nations, and pursuing the course of the natural sun, our western horizon is brightening; nor will he cease his progress until the whole world is enlightened by his rays—until from the mountains of Judea, which were tipt with his earliest beams, his light is spread to the remotest shore that is washed by the western wave. But a few centuries ago, our ancestors were bowing down to stocks and stones; or in the train of Druids, sacrificing bulls to God on altars erected in the sacred groves of his favourite oak. Now, the light of Revelation teaches us the true God, and we are permitted to worship him at altars erected on the soil, where the wild beast roamed, and the savage set up his war-whoop! and having experienced so much of the goodness of God ourselves, let us do all we can, in the way of God's appointment, for those who are in the condition in which we once were. That condition can be ameliorated only by the means which were successfully used upon ourselves—the preaching of the doctrines of the cross. This principle enters into the constitution of all Christian churches—that as they would see sinners become believers in Christ, they must afford them the opportunity of hearing his Gospel—that as they

would furnish the opportunity of *hearing*, they must send unto them preachers. In carrying this principle into successful operation, the Christians of Europe have, since the year 1795, been setting Christendom a noble example. They have been instrumental in shedding the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ through Asia, Africa, and the Islands of the Southern Ocean. Their Missionary Societies are "enobled by the patronage of royalty; supported by the contributions of opulence; consecrated by the prayers and wishes of philanthropy; and assisted by men of the first science and the first scholarship."* But I lament that in this country the noble example is not generally imitated. There are comparatively few such dignified associations thrown around the cause of Missions in America. Our great, and our rich, too generally look upon it as a visionary enterprize, and therefore withhold their influence and their wealth. And are there no assignable causes for this apathy? I fear, that among the *men of the world*, the good cause suffers by the intemperate zeal of some of its warm-hearted but weak-minded advocates. Grasping at, and promising too much, they gain nothing with this class of men. For viewing them as fanatics, and unjustly as fair samples of the religious world, they reluctant to embark in enterprizes which may in the result be characterized by the same wildness which mark their origin and their management; and thus a re-action is produced, which more than counterbalances any immediate advantages

* Dr. Chalmers.

that can accrue from the misguided impulse given to the sacred object. And as to many very wealthy and pious Christians, they stand aloof, because some of our missionary operations are unconnected with, and destitute of the supervision of some responsible and organized ecclesiastical judicature. And why should any who love the spread of the Gospel object to this union and responsibility? The answer, I fear, will not furnish a sufficient reason to compensate the loss of the co-operation of some of our best and ablest men.

Surely the plan of missions originated with the Head of the Church; and all its successful and glorious operations in the first ages emanated from, and were connected with, the church. Revelation, in this as well as every other Divine ordinance, inculcates order. There was order in all the arrangements of the service of the synagogue; there was order in the apostolical church, and there will be order in heaven. All Christ's people will there be *members of the church* triumphant, and as such will co-operate in the service and praise of God for ever. We should, therefore, in the church militant, acquire the habit of order, as we should a habit of holiness, which is order. We should, in all the service we render unto God, be in a course of training for the infinitely perfect employments of the spirits of the just; and especially should we be so, in all efforts to advance the interests, and extend the limits of the Redeemer's well-regulated kingdom; otherwise there may be no limits to the anarchy and ruin which may ensue. As an evidence of this, I would

name the practical results of the operations of the Home Missionary Society, relying upon, *without being responsible* for, the statements of my informant. This Society has no connection with, nor is it responsible for, its acts to any ecclesiastical judicature. Yet it is referred to by many, as the paragon of Missionary perfection. Hence, its monthly allowance to a Missionary, without any reference to a disparity of domestic circumstances, is becoming the standard of remuneration for the services of regularly settled Pastors. Some congregations have already told their Ministers, "The great and good men in the city of New York think a certain sum sufficient for a Missionary: if you will take this it is well; if not, we can raise no more." The result is, that some faithful ministers have been dismissed from their charges; and that there is a prospect of more dismissals in the current year, than has taken place in the past twenty years!

This may answer the purposes of some, as it will enable them to fill vacancies with men who will be subservient to their own views. But it illustrates the power which irresponsible men may bring to bear upon the regularly established ordinances of the church of Christ. In such schemes I cannot symbolize. I prefer missions that emanate from, and are connected with, some regular ecclesiastical judicatory. And if the projected-union between the General Assembly and the Reformed Dutch churches, in the management of domestic and foreign missionary operations, shall take place, I shall consider I have not lived in vain, that I with others have

contributed to bring about the desirable result. And if in this connection it should be objected to my course, that I am associated with the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, which is in no connection with, nor has any responsibility to, any ecclesiastical body, I answer, it is not a *Missionary* Society; that it originated with leading members of the Reformed Presbyterian and Dutch churches; and that its design is to bring converts from Judaism to the enjoyment of Gospel doctrines, and that sound ecclesiastical order, of which the services of their synagogue was the pattern.

3. I have the painful duty of vindicating my conduct in respect to modern plans for the revival of religion.

The *term* itself, in its application to the work of God's Spirit on the unrenewed heart, is a misnomer. That can never be *re-vived*, which had not previous life; *religion* cannot be revived where it never before existed. The reformation of the churches in the times of Luther and Calvin, after they degenerated to ignorance and error, was a most glorious revival of their primitive intelligence and purity. The Church of England has, within the last century, experienced one of the most glorious revivals of modern times. When the pious and devoted Romaine settled in London, he knew of but three men in the Establishment who preached the Gospel in its purity. Before he died, he knew of five hundred, and now there are more than two thousand! And when a particular church, or individual Christians, have become lukewarm and formal, and by the

grace of God have their graces quickened, remember their first love, and do their first works, there is a signal revival. In the existence of such revivals I believe; and for their more frequent occurrence, I most fervently pray.

I also believe and rejoice in the awakening of *unrenewed* sinners from their death of trespasses and sins. I am a friend of *Pentecost* scenes—of scenes in which thousands are converted to God through the instrumentality of his preached word, accompanied by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I believe in none of the new means of grace invented by men. I am disgusted to see the champions* of the new schemes of conversion, and their respective partisans, quarrelling about the value and efficacy of their respective nostrums. I have no faith in the avowal which it is said some of them have publicly made, that “the human mind needs no *instruction*; that it wants nothing but *excitement*.” For myself, I would rather see *one* convert as the result of preaching Peter’s doctrines—as the result of the still, small voice of the *Gospel*, accompanied by the Spirit, than to see *fifty* gathered into the church in a storm created by the *excitement* of mere human passions. Such schemes of promoting the cause of truth and of piety, I consider *apocryphal*. I therefore never have, nor ever will, while I have the use of my reason, unite in their promotion. They have *already* been found, and will ever be found, in operation, the firebrands which consume the long estab-

* The Rev. Messrs. Nettleton and Phinney.

lished enclosures of the Church—the little foxes which destroy our Lord's vineyard.*

4. Under this particular, I would briefly remark, in vindication of my conduct, relating to the supply of the pulpit during my absence, that at your own request, and according to the best of my judgment, I have used the little influence I had, for your advantage, and the result is entirely to my satisfaction. You have chosen for three months the Rev. David S. Bogert, a gentleman of good character and standing in our sister Dutch church, of sound doctrinal views, and of popular talent as a preacher; and I do cordially recommend you to call upon him for the performance of all pastoral duties, during the time of his lending you his valuable services; and “may He that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruit of your righteousness.”

II. The second point in Paul's address, to which I refer you, is his annunciation of a new sphere of labour. “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost

* The subject of *revivals* in America, is a topic of frequent conversation, and of much interest in England. The propriety of sending a clerical deputation across the Atlantic, to see how they are conducted, has been discussed at a large meeting of ministers. I should cordially rejoice to see any of our English Brethren in the United States; but in the pursuit of such an object, I fear they would discover the nakedness of the land. They have Moses, and the Prophets, and Christ. Let them *preach*, and their people *hear* them. In the use of such means, they will more surely obtain an out-pouring of the Spirit, by going to Heaven for it, than by going to America.

witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”*

Like Paul, the field of my labours is now to be changed for a season. I am raised from the sphere of a pastor of a flock of a few hundreds, to look after the temporal and spiritual interests of millions of precious souls. In fulfilling this trust, I may meet with much opposition, and many afflictions; and, like Paul, may see your faces no more on earth. This is no part of my intention or expectation. I mean to return to you as I leave you—your Pastor. But if my bones are to bleach on some distant shore, after the inhabitants of the deep destroy this flesh; or if my body is to be buried in British, or German, or Polish soil, *I am the Lord's*. Let him do with me as seemeth good in his sight! Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus. And in that event I now bid you a final and affectionate FAREWELL! “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”†

III. Paul in the next place gives a solemn charge to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus. “Take

* Ver. 22—25.

† Ver. 26, 27.

heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."*

I need not here pause to consider, whether those whom Paul thus addressed were teaching or ruling elders. In either case they were spiritual officers, to whom the best interests of the church were intrusted in his absence. And perceiving that a spirit of proselytism and schism was likely to arise among them, drawing away the members of the church from their existing relations, and from a belief of the truths he had inculcated, he charges them to *watch*: and excites them to greater care and vigilance, from a consideration of the value of souls, as bought with the precious blood of Christ, and from a recollection of the unwearied pains he had taken to warn them against deceivers, and to establish their minds in the knowledge and belief of the truth.

My brethren of the Eldership, I feel great solicitude, that what Paul predicted as about to occur at Ephesus, may not prove true in your case. We have had a little spice of a schismatic and proselyting

* Ver. 28—31.

disposition; and we may have more—therefore watch. “Take heed to yourselves,” that your own souls be seasoned with grace, and governed by right principles and views. And take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. To you are intrusted, and of right, the spiritual interests of this Church; let me, then, affectionately ask you to look to them. The congregation have very properly referred to you the supply of the pulpit during my absence, and at the end of three months, you will be called either to renew your application to the present supply, or to select some other person. Let him be one who holds to Christ as the Head, and who will preach the Gospel without alloy. And for your assistance in this, as in other official duties, such as the reception of members to the communion, or the administration of ordinances, I have invited my friend, and Co-presbyter, the Rev. Mr. M’Cartee, to be Moderator of your Sessional Meetings. Listen to his councils; for I hope I may say, without flattery or offence, though in his presence, that for intelligence, integrity, a talent for business, and a knowledge of true ecclesiastical order, I could not have selected a man more to my mind, to be your adviser.

Besides those duties, in which you need a Moderator to legalise your acts, allow me to call your attention to family visitation, to the keeping up of prayer meetings and catechetical instruction. Is any among you sick, let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him. Nor only pray in families as opportunity may offer, and afflic-

tion require, but in the social meeting. In this particular, the state of religion is lamentably low among us. Endeavour to promote its revival. All your springs as a Church are in God, and it is only by bending together at the throne of grace, that you can hope to obtain a blessing. May He pour out a spirit of supplication among you, and the result be, the descent of blessings till there shall not be room to receive them.

And by your prayers and instructions, look after the spiritual interests of the young. They are to constitute that church and community, which will be in existence when we are sleeping in the dust. The catechumens of this church have immortal souls; and they, as well as the more advanced in life, may soon be called before the bar of the righteous Judge of the world. One of the most interesting and promising of their number,* has recently been removed from our instructions by death, to a world of bliss, we trust, where the truths she learned here were designed to lead her: another is ill; and we know not how soon others may be summoned beyond the reach of your prayers and counsels. Train up these children, then, in the way they should go. Let them be instructed in the truths of the Bible, and so be trained for members of the church on earth, and for mingling at death with the spirits of the just made perfect.

IV. I shall now briefly refer you to Paul's commendation. "And now, brethren, I commend you

* A daughter of Charles Oakley, Esq.

to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”*

There is a peculiar solemnity in these parting words of Paul. They sound like the last words of the dying. They were virtually so in his case, as he was to see them no more on earth; and therefore he seems to concentrate all the energies of his sanctified soul, in the strongest expression of desire for their spiritual and eternal good. As though he had said, “In the wise dispensations of Providence, I must leave you; and however much it may grieve me to do so, it is a source of comfort, that I do not leave you as orphans without a father, or sheep without a shepherd, but can commend you to God, and the word of his grace.”

Brethren, this is my consolation at this trying hour:—that though I must now temporarily leave you, you will be in much better hands—the hands *of God*, who is all-sufficient to supply your wants, and save your souls; of God, who is the best friend—never leaving or forsaking those who put their trust in Him; of that God, who is the strength of their hearts, and their unfailing portion, when mortal flesh and heart shall fail. To His care do I solemnly commit you. With Him I make this precious deposit, trusting that He will protect and defend you from all your foes. And I commit you to the *Word of his grace*—to *Christ*, the eternal *Word* of God, who “was made flesh, and dwelt among us,

* Ver. 32.

full of grace and truth ;" who is God's unspeakable *gift* to men, and who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. I commit you to the *word* or Gospel of his grace ;—to that plan of salvation which, originating in the unmerited grace of God, is able to build you up in knowledge, and holiness, and comfort, and thus to conduct you to, and put you in the full possession of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens."

Having thus commended you to God, and the word of his grace, I will give you a few advices by which I hope you may attain the end of that commendation.

As the pulpit is to be regularly supplied, so far gratify me, so far respect yourselves, and so far consult the welfare of the congregation, as regularly to attend this place of worship. An *habit* of wandering from church to church, does injury to others by the force of example, and it is a disgrace to him who does it, as it discovers the fickleness of his mind, and the difficulty of being pleased. Before a person locates himself in any particular church, he ought well to consider the step he is about to take ; and after he has made up his mind, he ought to feel more interest in that particular church than in any other. Just as the member of a particular family, while he is commanded to love others, feels a peculiar obligation to love and consult the interest of the family to which he belongs. If indeed for good reasons he becomes dissatisfied where he is, he should change his relations ; and the sooner the better, both

for himself and the Society to which he is attached. He will profit more elsewhere ; and he will make room for some other person who will be of more advantage than himself. You have hitherto been my witnesses, that I have solicited no man to connect himself with this congregation ; and you are now my witnesses, that I *solicit* no one to remain in it. As you then, Brethren, have voluntarily chosen this as the place of your worship, prove the soundness of your judgment, and the consistency of your character, by habitually occupying your respective places.

Nor only give habitual and punctual attendance, seek to profit your precious souls under the ministrations you may enjoy. No respect to the house of God, or the minister of his house, can compensate for your want of personal religion. Let it not be your condemnation then, “ that light has come into the world, and you love darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil.”* “ As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”† With such a disposition you may get good by the feeblest ministrations.

The worst speak something good. If *all* want sense,
God takes a text and preacheth patience.‡

Those who hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness, have something else to do in the sanctuary than to carp, and criticise, and find fault, with the method and manner of the preacher. They come to hear the word for the word's sake ; and not

* John iii. 19.

+ 1 Peter ii. 2.

‡ Herbert.

for the sake of him who dispenses it. You never read in the diaries of those who have recorded their exercises in the house of God, any censorious remarks upon the sermons they have heard. If the sermon is good, they state in what particulars it was applicable to their case; and if, through the incapacity or inattention of the preacher, the subject was badly managed; if they find nothing *good* to say, they say no evil; they ascribe to their own dulness the fact that they do not profit. Imitate the example of those who have gone to their rest. Let not a censorious and critical disposition, wither the graces of your spirits, and harden your hearts against the impressions of Divine truth. Hear “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”* Hear as those who are highly favoured in having the Gospel of the grace of God; hear as dying men, and as those, who after death, must answer at the bar of God for their Sabbath opportunities. Hear in faith and love, and be not *hearers* only, but doers of the word. If you *know* the truth, *walk* in the truth. Let its counsels guide, and its precepts regulate your lives. Spare us the pain, then, of hearing that any who have professed religion, are loitering, and wandering, and going back to the world. Do not dishonour the cause of God, do not give occasion to the world to blaspheme, by walking in unrighteousness, after having named the name of Christ. For the credit of Christianity,

* 1 Thess. ii. 13.

for the glory of God, I entreat you, walk circumspectly—walk in newness of life—walk in the truth.

And in order to this, remember where is your strength. Not in yourselves, but in another. It is “in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” It is the all-sufficiency of the grace which is in Christ Jesus. While, therefore, you look to *yourselves* in holy watchfulness, look constantly to Him, “who is able to keep you from falling,” and to invigorate and encourage you in your Christian course. For this cause, bow your knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; and beg of him that he would grant you, according to his riches in glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that thus you may run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

“If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”*

I now refer you to the last clause of the 38th verse—“And they accompanied him to the ship.” The practical commentary of these words I leave to yourselves, after informing you, that at ten o’clock to-morrow morning, I go on board the steam-boat *Nautilus*, from Whitehall dock, to convey me to the packet-ship *York* for Liverpool.

* Phil. ii. 1, 2.

Having thus called your attention to an Address very unworthy of you and the occasion, I invite you to unite with me in invoking God's presence and blessing, after the example of the Apostle, recorded in the 36th verse, "*And when he had thus spoken, he PRAYED with them all.*"

May the prayers then offered be heard! And to the Father, Son, and Spirit, be glory for ever. Amen.
